

July 2012

Newsletter for the Residents of Fair Oaks Ranch

Volume 2, Issue 7

MANAGING PESTS the Eco-Friendly Way

By Nathan Riggs

Anytime there is a beautiful landscape on display, there are insects lurking in the background to take advantage of opportunities for food and shelter among the plants.

For some, insects are unwelcome visitors to the landscape and must be removed. For others, insects are a reflection of the natural order and balance in the environment and are welcome inhabitants.

Integrated pest management, or IPM, is a way to control pests by using a wide variety of approaches that don't focus solely on pesticides, including:

- **Biological control** Using beneficial insects or organisms to control pests and develop a natural pest/predator balance.
- **Mechanical control** Physically removing the pest organism by hand or with traps and barriers.
- **Cultural practices** Selecting plants that are insect- or disease-resistant and/or drought-tolerant.
- **Monitoring** Checking your landscape periodically for the presence of unwelcome plants or insects instead of regular treatments; and watering only when the landscape needs it.
- Acceptable pest levels Focusing on control, not eradication; and understanding how many insects can be present before damage occurs to the plants, if any.
- **Responsible pesticide use** Using a pesticide only to reduce pest populations that are out of control; and following labeled directions and using only recommended amounts.

With this in mind, combining a well-managed xeric landscape with IPM practices results in a beautiful array of native and drought-tolerant plants that provide color throughout the year, while maintaining a level of insect and disease resistance to satisfy even the most persnickety gardener.

Nathan Riggs is a conservation project manager for San Antonio Water System.

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Catch On to Composting

By Lisa Spears

Composting doesn't have to be difficult. You can feed your garden effortlessly and save money doing it. Composting also increases your soil's water-holding capacity, reduces your waste-hauling costs and repays your efforts tenfold.

A good compost heap consists of: two-thirds carbon (or browns) such as newspaper, wood ash, straw, leaves, dryer lint and pet hair; and one-third nitrogen (or greens) such as grass clippings, coffee grounds, tea leaves, vegetable peels, manure and small yard trimmings.

Keep in mind that too much carbon slows material breakdown, while too much nitrogen gives compost a slimy quality and unpleasant smell.

To start a compost pile, work from the bottom up:

- First layer is coarse and airy Twigs or leaves help bacteria survive and break down compost material.
- Next layer is brown Straw and newspaper.

- Now, switch to green Kitchen scraps and grass clippings.
- Top it off with a compost activator Blood meal, bone meal, chicken litter or seaweed.
- Cover your heap with plastic (old shower curtain liners work great) to help heat it quickly so the material breaks down. And, if it rains again, it's protected. Soupy compost is never good.

Beneficial organisms require oxygen to break down the materials into organic matter. Experts debate on whether turning actually speeds the process. You may turn over your compost every two-three weeks or insert a PVC pipe into the middle of it and let the material decompose on its own.

Now, you're on your way to a bright composting future!

Lisa Spears is a conservation field technician for San Antonio Water System.



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FAIR OAKS RANCH Radical Change for Routine Prostate Cancer Treatment

New study results have just upended a decades-old prostate cancer therapy approach. The international study involving the Cancer Therapy & Research Center at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio shows that men with less advanced metastatic prostate cancer who were prescribed intermittent hormone therapy died an average of two years sooner than those on continuous therapy.

"I now treat patients very differently," said Ian M. Thompson Jr., M.D., director of the Cancer Therapy & Research Center at the UT Health Science Center and senior author of the long-term study that he said "will change clinical care forever."

Hormone treatments fight prostate cancer by turning off testosterone production in men's bodies. But the side effects of those treatments include mood changes, bone loss, sexual dysfunction, hot flashes and weight gain. For those reasons, many men with less advanced metastatic cancer and their doctors have been happy to "pulse" the treatment — use it until the cancer stops growing, halt the treatment for a while, and then restart it when the cancer begins to grow again.

But when all the results came in, that group of men fared significantly worse than expected. "The very patients you'd logically offer intermittent therapy did not do as well," Dr. Thompson said. "What I and so many of us who specialize in prostate cancer thought we knew, based on our experience, was simply wrong.

This is an example of the vital importance of a well-done clinical trial." The results of the international study were announced yesterday at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

The quality-of-life issues that go along with hormone therapy, while occasionally a problem for some patients, are treatable, Dr. Thompson noted. If the results had been the same in both intermittent and continuous treatments, intermittent would be preferable, he said. "But it is a distant second."

Men with more advanced metastatic disease, which generally progresses quickly and becomes hormone-resistant, had similar survival rates on both types of treatment.

The study led by SWOG, an international network of research institutions, included more than 1,500 men with hormone-sensitive metastatic prostate cancer who were randomly assigned to receive

intermittent hormonal therapy or continuous hormonal therapy. Patients in the intermittent therapy group received about half as much hormonal therapy as those in the continuous therapy group.

After a median follow-up of 9.2 years, overall survival in men with minimal disease spread (meaning it did not spread beyond the spine, pelvis, and lymph nodes) was 7.1 years for those who received continuous therapy. That compares to 5.2 years for the intermittent therapy group. Among men with more extensive disease spread, overall survival was similar in both arms (4.4 years for the continuous therapy group versus 5 years for the intermittent group).

"In comparison to many current 'breakthrough' treatments for prostate cancer that improve survival by two to three months, this is an incredible discovery," Dr. Thompson said.

For more information or to schedule an appointment at the CTRC, call (210) 450-1000, or visit the website, at ctrc.net, for a listing of UT Medicine San Antonio doctors and clinics.

Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC) at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio is one of the elite academic cancer centers in the country to be named a National Cancer Institute (NCI) Designated Cancer Center, and is one of only four in Texas. A leader in developing new drugs to treat cancer, the CTRC Institute for Drug Development (IDD) conducts one of the largest oncology Phase I clinical drug programs in the world, and participates in development of cancer drugs approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. For more information, visit www.ctrc.net.

The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, one of the country's leading health sciences universities, ranks in the top 3 percent of all institutions worldwide receiving federal funding. Research and other sponsored program activity totaled \$231 million in fiscal year 2011. The university's schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, health professions and graduate biomedical sciences have produced approximately 28,000 graduates. The \$736 million operating budget supports eight campuses in San Antonio, Laredo, Harlingen and Edinburg. For more information on the many ways "We make lives better"," visit www.uthscsa.edu.

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FAIR OAKS RANCH To Hang or Not to Hang the Placard? Submitted by Sharon Perica

One of the things that can happen in life is that you become blindly followed the example of countless others-who had also

eligible for a handicapped placard. I "earned" mine by wearing my knees out. And, by having a couple of surgeries on them. Enough about me. Once you have your own blue parking pass, you become aware of just how many there are on cars everywhere.

Here's the deal—right ON the placard it states, "Do not drive vehicle with placard hanging from the mirror." It impairs the driver's vision. Now, like any newbie placard owner I thought I HAD to hang it right up there on the mirror and drive with it in place. Why? I had seen them there all my life and thought I had to abide by the "law."

What happened at my house is that my husband insisted that we NOT leave it on the mirror, but only hang it when parking. As I took it down from the mirror on its first trip, there it was-the instructions from the state telling me NOT to leave it on my mirror. I felt so dumb



failed to read the instructions. Ain't life grand?

I have come to love my little placard and use it no matter what car or state I am in. It travels in my purse and on planes. Here's the kickerif you always have it with you, you might just qualify for FREE parking downtown! Happened to me at the Majestic just the other day. We had already given the man our ten dollars and when we asked about handicapped parking, he quickly refunded our fee. Yet another reason to break the habit of leaving it hanging on your own car back at home.

So, now spread the word to all your friends and family who have a blue placard. They'll appreciate getting that part of their windshield back and I know they are going to love the free parking downtown. Of course, I don't have any suggestions for what to do when you leave it in your other car, or on the kitchen counter. That

seems to happen all too often around my house. that I had not bothered to read the instructions and that I had





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Confessions of a Feeder

Submitted by Sharon Perica

Some of you may not know that Fair Oaks has two kinds of people, "haters" and "feeders." SHOCKING—There are people who hate DEER? Really? Yes, really.

When I was really little, I remember my parents taking me to the outskirts of San Antonio—inside Loop 410—in the hopes that we would see deer, and most times, we did. I can remember having the rare chance to see them when we drove out to the country on Sundays, or when we went to romp in the blue bonnets. It was love at first sight.

In 2004 we chose our new home and made the big move. The previous owner had been a "feeder" who fed two kinds of food plus a loaf of bread daily. She left me detailed directions and 2 bags of food. When we pulled up out front we were greeted by the biggest herd I had ever seen in my life. After stashing my two cats safely inside, I fed "our" deer. They were eating out of my hand in minutes--literally.

Then we came upon a new "problem." How to avoid hitting them? Neither of us had ever dealt with this road hazard before. So, we exercised extreme caution and studied their habits. Are they out during the day? Oh yes. How about the night? Of course? Do they seem to have a certain pattern of eating and sleeping? No, not really. So we continued to watch them.

Then we found some clues to keep the deer and our bumpers in

different places. When their heads are down, they are not likely to move. They are munching and have no reason to bolt. But, when their heads are up—pay attention. Either they have noticed something threatening or they are about to wander in some direction...possibly right into the road.

The biggest clue? If one deer crosses your path, stop and wait. They almost never go anywhere alone. They usually travel in enormous herds—don't be surprised if 13 cross the road in rapid succession, followed by another 13. That is the key to avoiding them.

Am I still a feeder? No,but I do share my salad left overs with them. If I trim leaves off something, or the ends off a fruit or veggie, I absolutely share with them. I no longer buy corn or special deer food for them. This I did for myself. It's just too easy to get attached forget they are wild.

Not long ago, I found a poem that described how rare it is to see deer out in the wild It stressed how we must quiet ourselves to be lucky enough to see them. I had to smile to myself thinking how we have endless opportunities to deer-watch. I guess it's easy to take their beauty for granted.





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FAIR OAKS RANCH Financial Focus - Student Loans Crushing College Grads

Submitted by Rich Keith

Today's college grads are facing the "real world" with an extra scoop of debt. Two-thirds of students graduating from college or graduate school have student loans – about \$25,000 on average. That's a 25% increase over the past 10 years. In fact, today's twentysomething holds an average debt of \$45,000, including everything from student loans to mortgages and credit cards. Unfortunately, unemployment for those aged 18-29 is 12.4%, well above the national rate of 8.2%.

Don't feel as if you have to be the savior. Six in 10 boomers report giving financial help (outside of college tuition) to a child or grandchild in the past five years. Of those, \$59,000 was the average amount of aid. If this sounds like you, ask yourself: Do I really have the resources? Am I saving enough for retirement? Try to share more financial wisdom and less cash with your adult offspring. The more you save for your own future means less possibility that you'll need their help later on. Without going into too much detail, share the family financial picture with your children once they hit the mid-teen years. They need to know the family income is X and it takes Y amount to cover the mortgage and bills. Once they see X minus Y in action they will be surprised at how

> much it actually costs to run a household. This may have a side benefit of limiting how much and how often your children ask you for money and gifts.

Children who have a basic understanding of money, especially the corrosive effects of debt, have a better chance of becoming financially independent later in life. They will be more resistant to the credit card offers sure to come to them in their freshman year at college. And they will more ready to partner with their parents as the family manages their college finances with them.



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It's not the end of the world: Raising Resilient Children

By Sugandha Jain

"It is far more important to know how to deal with the negative than to be positive"

----Martin Seligman, Author of the book Learned Optimism

Do you want your children to grow up to be fragile as a flower or tough as Teflon? If you want your children to be strong, then, you need to fuel them with power to face every adversity that comes their way. According to Paul Stoltz, Aversity Quotient (AQ) is the ability of individuals to withstand adversity and surmount it. Resilient children with a high AQ turn obstacles into opportunities.

Resiliency is the ability to not only survive, but thrive. In order to remain strong, we must stretch ourselves and spring forward. In life, things happen that knock us back for awhile. We just don't want to get stuck there. We may fall back, but then look out-were moving forward, stronger than ever!

A rubber band can be used to explain the concept of resilience in children. A rubber band can be stressed and stretched, but it quickly returns to its regular shape when the stressor is gone. Similarly the resilient child quickly «bounces back» from stress or trauma. This ability to recover quickly from a stressful experience is important to brain development. When a child is stressed the brain is bathed in a stress hormone called cortisol. If cortisol levels remain high, the hormone starts to interfere with the development of connections within the brain.

A 2012 study by Stanford University School of Medicine team used used MRI scans to identify how humor affects children's minds. The research proves that a strong sense of humor is an important part of positive emotion and may help children to be more resilient. Being able to see the humor in stressful situations, or to be able to laugh at difficult things can make children successful in life.

Parents have to find ways to laugh more and find humor in everyday life. Laugh at yourself and FOR your children. As parents we have many opportunities to show our children when things don't go as planned, that we can fret, pout, wish for different circumstances OR we can bounce back and make fun!

Sugandha Jain is Master Registered Texas Trainer and Director of Accreditation at a local preschool.

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